DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 433 899 JC 990 614

| | |
|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Robinson, Shawn |
| TITLE | Why Is TQM Not a Part of the Community College Vocabulary? |
| PUB DATE | 1997-00-00 |
| NOTE | 11p. |
| PUB TYPE | Reports - Evaluative (142) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC01 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | *College Administration; *Community Colleges; *Educational Planning; Higher Education; Management Development; Management Systems; Organizational Objectives; Program Implementation; *Total Quality Management; Two Year Colleges |

ABSTRACT

This article reviews the basic principles of Total Quality Management (TQM) and how they can be applied to the administration of community colleges. TQM is a customer (student)-focused, continuous-improvement, quality-oriented way of thinking about all aspects of operating an organization that is shared and practiced by all employees (faculty and staff) as they think and work together. For TQM to be successful the following concepts must be present: leadership, information and analysis, strategic quality planning, human resource use, quality assurance of services, quality results, and customer satisfaction. While TQM spells out exactly what is needed in the administrative structure to succeed, it acknowledges that the organization must be motivated to implement not only a new program but also a new way of thinking and must be willing to take the time to learn the program through training. All members of the organization must desire quality and believe that it is possible to achieve; they must be willing to learn and change; they must be operating in an environment of trust, and they must have a sense of ownership in the institution. This article explains the obstacles community colleges face in trying to implement TQM, and provides specific suggestions for overcoming these difficulties, including an assessment of the college mission and personnel. (CB)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED 433 899

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S. Robinson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

# Why is TQM not a part of the Community College Vocabulary?

Shawn Robinson
Problems in the Community College
Spring, 1997

Dr. Thomas Kubala

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

## THE PROBLEM

In the Community College, assisting the student in reaching her or his goals is the main prior of faculty, staff, and administration. Without successful students, the institution will have trouble justifying its existence. Serving the community, local agencies, area businesses and industries, and the university system effective are other goals of the community college. With these issues in mind and the problems facing community colleges, one must wonder what keeps Total Quality Management (TQM) from being implemented at this level of education.

Students are graduating without skills necessary for success in universities and the workforce. Faculty are having problems communicating and relating to students. Administrators have lost touch with the mission of the college, the students, staff, and faculty. The retention rates are not increasing, even with Title III grants, special programs, and other innovative ideas. There is a lack community in the community college.

Obviously, this picture just painted is not every community college, nor is it to say that entire colleges are this way. The point is to suggest that many in the community, in government, and in industry may perceive this as occurring based on limited exposure to community colleges. There will always be at least a few pockets of resistance to mediocracy on every college campus that

JC 970614



2 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

will not allow this to happen. The problem is in creating a systematic and pervasive organization grounded in the college mission and vision that effectively serves the needs of the students and the community stakeholders. The community college can do this by embracing the principles of TQM and modifying these principles to meet the needs of the institution.

What is TQM and its benefits?

Hammons defines Total Quality Management (TQM) as "a customer-focused, continuous improvement, quality-oriented way of thinking about all aspects of operating an organization that is shared and practiced by all employees as they think about and work together." For many colleges, the "customers" are students, parents, and businesses while the "employees" are paid college personnel from the CEO to hourly workers. The emphasis must be placed squarely on providing a quality education to students so that they can be productive in society and the workplace.

For TQM to be successful for a business or an education organization, certain concepts must be present. Wenrich has listed those concepts as:

1. Leadership,
2. Information and Analysis,
3. Strategic Quality Planning,
4. Human Resource Use,
5. Quality Assurance of Services,
6. Quality Results, and

7. Customer Satisfaction.

To achieve the full potential possible by implementing TQM, Jones and Timmerman further articulate the specific aspects of the goals, benefits, and requirements in this process and their relationship to the college community.

1. focus on quality,
2. customer-driven,
3. emphasizes continuous improvement,
4. concentrates on making processes work better,
5. extends the mindset,
6. involves the discipline of information,
7. eliminates rework,
8. emphasizes teamwork,
9. empowers people,
10. invests in training and recognition,
11. requires vision,
12. requires leadership,
13. encourage student-faculty contact,
14. encourage cooperation among students,
15. encourage active learning,
16. give prompt feedback,
17. emphasize time on task,
18. communicate high expectations, and

19. respect diverse talents and ways of learning.

Each of the above listed items is a true benefit of TQM if done correctly. Not one of the areas is exclusive to business or education or government. The student in the classroom should be willing to develop leadership skills, actively learn, and have high expectations of oneself and of college. Other benefits of the process in education include a seemingly seamless organization in which groups communicate effectively and openly to achieve the same goals with a common vision.

When and where can TQM be implemented?

In order for TQM to be successful in the community college, one must examine the assumptions that must be made. Each assumption must be taken seriously by administrators and "change makers" for many reasons. Reasons for failed TQM experiences are derived from not fully understanding the fears and goals of the affected groups (faculty, students, staff, and other personnel). If any of the necessary assumptions are not present, Hammons suggests looking at devoting time to dealing with that assumption prior implementing TQM. There must also be a commitment to making sure that the confirmed assumptions are reality. The following list contains the assumptions stated in an article by Hammons.

TQM Assumptions

1. Students, parents, employers, and employees (customers and providers) really want quality and can agree on what it means.
2. College personnel believe that improvement in quality is needed.
3. College personnel believe that improvement in quality is possible.

4. College personnel are willing to change and can learn.
5. College administrators are wiling to empower (delegate to) people in the college.
6. College personnel are not afraid.
7. College personnel have a sense of ownership.

If the assumptions are analyzed and dealt with appropriately, TQM can be used, even in the classroom. Total Quality Management can be a part of the overall class structure or an intended result of the educational experience. The TQM processes for students in the classroom are the same as those for the institution. Students must be given "consistent applications and opportunities to build upon prior knowledge in the use of TQM or similar concepts ... throughout student coursework. (Schmahl)" For the student, in a TQM- engineered classroom, the following should be expected (TQM in American Schools):

1. Completion of projects before the deadline,
2. Reduction in the number of mistakes made,
3. Empowerment to make decisions, and
4. Accountability for individual and team (group) work,

The above competencies are already desired by effective and successful instructors. If a student is to be an effective life-long learner and productive part of society, then careful attention must be placed on teaching and evaluating students in such a manner. This can only happen if the system allows for the education of "faculty on TQM concepts, principles and terms. (Schmahl)"

TQM can be used in the assessment of students, faculty, programs, chairs, and virtually any segment of the college that either produces a product or provides a service. Paul Lee states that "quality can only develop through a systems approach" that involves all parties in deciding the expected outcomes. Lee further writes that "higher education must review its mission and challenge faculty and staff to identify their respective departmental, division and program philosophies, goals, objectives, and expected outcomes." These outcomes are the cornerstone to effective and meaningful assessment. Without knowing what is to be measured and assessed prior to doing so, the data collection process may not lead to useful results. Assessment under the TQM model must focus on the process rather than the product. From grading tests to evaluating faculty and programs, the process and development of skills, knowledge, and efficiency must be the mark of success.

## HOW TO GET TQM IN PLACE

If TQM is such a wonderful thing, then what is the hold up? The problem with TQM implementation rests with the administration and its ability to persuade faculty and staff. Training, acknowledging necessary assumptions, and understanding the process are major factors in TQM's success.

Van Allen suggests that existing college beliefs and practices must be extremely close to those of TQM. He writes that "leadership must provide motivation for employee groups to discard past behaviors, which they understand, and provide security for new behaviors." Furthermore, a important reason for failure is that TQM is not a straight fit for academic settings and must be

modified and can take years to implement. Change must be taken seriously and cautiously in order to be effective.

In addition to the college atmosphere, another part of the solution to the effective implementation of TQM in the community college, relies on training. There are workshops, conferences, and seminars specifically geared towards training supervisors in total quality management principles. One such seminar is a two-day hosted by Miami University in Oxford, Ohio and run by Gary Shulman. The seminar of February, 1997 was titled "The Quality Centered Chair." Its purposes included allowing chairs to learn how to "apply continuous quality management principles to academic departments." Upon seminar completion, the chairs should know ways to align faculty and chair goals, design self- assessment strategies for the department, and be able to use diagnostic instruments. The key elements of the workshop are: leadership, mutual trust, teamwork, faculty/staff empowerment, creating partnerships, process focus, and continuous improvement. Such endeavors are a must for any group of administrators and lead faculty wishing to be truly effective in the TQM process.

Even with proper training, total quality management must start from the top and work down. It must be pervasive and seen as a positive quest. With much of the initial weight falling on the success of administrative motivation of, and explanation to, the faculty, Hammons lists some essentials for administrators.

Essentials for TQM

1. Administrators understand TQM,

2. Administrators know what TQM implementation entails,
3. Administrators know how to implement TQM,
4. Administrators understand the costs required in time and money,
5. Will administrators see TQM through completion?
6. Top administrators are trusted by faculty and staff
7. Is the college healthy enough to withstand TQM Trauma?
8. Administrators are willing to change ways if needed,
9. Administrators will commit the money necessary,
10. Administrators must educate college about TQM,
11. Administrators must train people in the TQM Tools,
12. Administrators need to train people to work as teams,
13. Administrators need to model behaviors to be followed,
14. Administrators must reward in fair and equitable ways,
15. Administrators must use databases of information to share and improve not punish or judge,
16. Administrators need to define the customers,
17. Administrators must allow customers to define quality, and
18. Administrators need to make needed personnel changes.

An honest assessment of the college atmosphere, college personnel from CEO to hourly employees, and students is critical to successful TQM implementation. The lists provided in this paper are scales by which to judge what is required of the college community and what some of the rewards can be. If the requirements, assumptions, and rewards are not in line with the college mission and vision, then TQM will fail. The mission, the vision, the college community, and

TQM principles must be in harmony (or at least close) for prosperity and placement into the college culture.

REFERENCES

Hammons, James O. (1994, July-August). Can Total Quality Management Success at Your College-Now? (Does your College Meet the Essential Prerequisites and Underlying Assumptions of TQM?). Community College Journal, 18 (4), 335-344.

Hunt, Todd (1997). TQM in American Schools. Internet site not available. Source: Del Valle, Christina. (1996, October). Total Quality Management: Now It's a Class Act. Business Week, 72-73.

Jones, J. and Timmerman, L. (1994, July-August). Total Quality Management Assessment, Teaching, and Learning: Toward a Campuswide Language and System. Community College Journal, 18 (4), 411-418.

Lee, Paul. Some Parallels of TQM and Assessment. VCCA Journal, Volume 8, Number 1, Summer 1993, 12-14. Available: http://www.so.cc.va.us/vcca/lee.htm

Miami University (1997). The Quality Centered Chair. Seminar on TQM in the academic department by Gary Shulman. Available: http://miavx1.muohio.edu/~cedewis/TQM_MayOctFeb.htmlx

Schmahl, Karen E. TQM Threads in an Engineering Curriculum - TQM Threads in an Engineering Curriculum. Miami University.
Available:http://fairway.ecn.purdue.edu/fre/asee/sect95/1A/1A5.html

Schauerman, S., Manno, D., and Peachy, B. (July-August). Listening to the Customer: Implementing Quality Function Deployment. Community College Journal, 18 (4), 397-410.

Schauerman, S. and Peachy, B. (1994, July-August). Strategies for Implementation: The El Camino College Total Quality Management Story. Community College Journal, 18 (4), 345-358.

Thor, Linda. (1994, July-August). Introducing the Human Side of Total Quality Management into Educational Institutions. Community College Journal, 18 (4), 359-368.

LeTarte, C. and Schwinn, C. (1994, July-August). Evolution of TQM Principles and Practices at Jackson Community College. Community College Journal, 18 (4), 369-380.

Van Allen, George H. (1994, July-August). Failures of Total Quality Management: Products of Leadership and Organizational Culture. Community College Journal, 18 (4), 381-390.

Wenrich, J. William. (1994, July-August). A Partnership between the Dallas County Community College District and Texas Instruments: Using Total Quality Management to Reinvent Workforce Preparation. Community College Journal, 18 (4), 391-396.